

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A lock interface for a biometric lock, the biometric lock being adapted to selectively restrict access to an enclosure, the lock interface comprising:
 - a body;
 - a biometric sensor mounted to the body for reading a unique identifying characteristic of an individual; and
 - a biometric alignment feature associated with the biometric sensor to assist a user in properly positioning the unique identifying characteristic with respect to the biometric sensor.
2. The lock interface recited in claim 1, wherein the biometric sensor is rectangular and includes a top boundary, a bottom boundary, a right boundary and a left boundary.
3. The lock interface recited in claim 2, wherein the biometric alignment feature includes a first crosshair positioned adjacent to the top boundary, a second crosshair positioned adjacent to the bottom boundary, a third crosshair positioned adjacent to the right boundary, and a fourth crosshair positioned adjacent to the left boundary, wherein the first crosshair, second crosshair, third crosshair, and fourth crosshair provide a guide for placing the unique identifying characteristic on the biometric sensor.
4. The lock interface recited in claim 3, wherein the first and second crosshairs are perpendicular to the third and fourth crosshairs.

5. The lock interface recited in claim 3, wherein the biometric sensor has a first axis that bisects the top and bottom boundaries, and a second axis that bisects the right and left boundaries, wherein the first and second crosshairs lie on the first axis, and wherein the third and fourth crosshairs lie on the second axis.

6. The lock interface recited in claim 5, wherein the first and second axes are perpendicular.

7. The lock interface recited in claim 1, wherein the biometric sensor is a capacitive sensor.

8. The lock interface recited in claim 1, wherein the unique identifying characteristic is a fingerprint.

9. The lock interface recited in claim 1, further comprising a light emitting mechanism associated with the biometric sensor for selectively illuminating the biometric sensor.

10. The lock interface recited in claim 9, wherein the a light emitting mechanism is a light emitting diode.

11. The lock interface recited in claim 9, wherein a first portion of the body is formed of a material that allows light to pass therethrough, wherein the

light emitted by the light emitting mechanism is directed through the first portion and onto the biometric sensor.

12. The lock interface recited in claim 1, further comprising a display coupled with the body for conveying information to a user of the biometric lock.

13. An enclosure including a body and a door that define an interior compartment, the door being hingedly mounted to a body of the enclosure, the enclosure comprising:

a biometric lock coupled with the enclosure that may be used to selectively lock and unlock the door relative to the body of the enclosure, the biometric lock including a controller, a biometric sensor, and an administrator function, the biometric sensor being mounted to the body of the enclosure for reading a unique identifying characteristic of an individual, the controller having a memory for storing at least one fingerprint read by the biometric sensor, wherein the administrator function is adapted to clear the at least one unique identifying characteristic stored in the memory;

a key lock coupled to the enclosure to selectively lock and unlock the door of the enclosure, wherein the biometric lock and the key lock independently operate to selectively lock and unlock the door of the enclosure; and

an administrator locking mechanism including an axis and a cam member, the axis coupled with the cam member and being adapted to change the position of the cam member when the key lock is moved between locked

and unlocked positions, wherein the cam member positioned to restrict access to the administrator function when the key lock is in a locked position, and wherein the cam member is positioned to allow access to the administrator function when the key lock is in an unlocked position.

14. The enclosure recited in claim 13, wherein the enclosure includes an actuator that operates to lock and unlock the door relative to the body of the enclosure, wherein the cam member interacts with the actuator to unlock the safe when the key lock is moved to an unlocked position.

15. A method for unlocking a safe using a biometric lock, the biometric lock including a locking mechanism and a lock interface having a biometric sensor and a display, the method comprising:

initiating the biometric lock by contacting at least a portion of the lock interface;

recognizing a visual cue that indicates that a unique identifying characteristic is to be entered using the biometric sensor; and

entering the unique identifying characteristic feature using the biometric sensor, wherein the entered unique identifying characteristic is compared with a stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user stored in a memory location within the biometric lock, wherein the safe is unlocked if the entered unique identifying characteristic matches the stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user, and wherein the safe remains locked if the entered unique identifying characteristic does not match the stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the visual cue is information displayed on the display.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said information is at least one of text and a symbol.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the visual cue is at least one of light emitted onto the biometric sensor and a biometric alignment feature positioned in association with the biometric sensor.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the biometric sensor is rectangular and includes a top boundary, a bottom boundary, a right boundary and a left boundary, wherein the biometric alignment feature includes a first crosshair positioned adjacent to the top boundary, a second crosshair positioned adjacent to the bottom boundary, a third crosshair positioned adjacent to the right boundary, and a fourth crosshair positioned adjacent to the left boundary, wherein the first crosshair, second crosshair, third crosshair, and fourth crosshair provide a guide for placing of the unique identifying characteristic on the biometric sensor.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the biometric sensor has a first axis that bisects the top and bottom boundaries, and a second axis that bisects the right and left boundaries, wherein the first and second crosshairs lie on the first axis, and wherein the third and fourth crosshairs lie on the second axis.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the first and second axes are perpendicular.

22. A method for unlocking a safe using a biometric lock, the biometric lock including a locking mechanism and a lock interface having a biometric sensor and a display, the method comprising:

providing the ability to initiate the biometric lock by contacting at least a portion of the lock interface;

providing a visual cue that indicates that a unique identifying characteristic is to be entered using the biometric sensor;

providing the ability to enter the unique identifying characteristic feature using the biometric sensor; and

comparing the entered unique identifying characteristic with a stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user stored in a memory location within the biometric lock, wherein the safe is unlocked if the entered unique identifying characteristic matches the stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user, and wherein the safe remains locked if the entered unique identifying characteristic does not match the stored unique identifying characteristic of an authorized user.